

**DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**



BRIAN SCHWEITZER
GOVERNOR

JOAN MILES
DIRECTOR

STATE OF MONTANA

www.dphhs.mt.gov

PO Box 4210
HELENA, MT 59604-4210

Date: March 24, 2008

To: All TANF Cash Assistance Policy Manual & WoRC Guideline Holders

From: Dana Meldrum, TANF Program Officer
Del Bock, TANF Supervisor
Carol W. Carpenter, TANF Program Officer
Public Assistance Bureau, Central Office.

Subject: TANF Cash Assistance Bulletin TB-41

Please place this bulletin at the beginning of the TANF Manual, Section 801-3 and Section 4.1 of the WoRC Guidelines.

=====

SECTION: Time Limited Assistance
WoRC Case Management

SUBJECT: TANF Extended Benefit Policy and Procedure
Documenting Progress

INTRODUCTION: Due to increased questions regarding Extended Benefit Policy and Procedure the following information should clearly outline application requirements. It is important the every Case Manager and Supervisor clearly understand Extended Benefit Policy so they can effectively convey this information to participants.

POLICY CHANGES: The HCS 326- *Domestic Violence Screening Questionnaire* is required for all DMV applicants.

In addition to the HCS 326-*Domestic Violence Screening Questionnaire* an applicant must provide proof of a current domestic violence situation. Possible options for verification are listed below.

NIH requires the person being cared for to be a member of the filing unit or a person who would be a member of the filing unit if the person was eligible.

POLICY REMINDERS:

Codes and Criterion

PMI Physical/Mental Incapacity of Participant OR

PMD Physical/Mental Incapacity resulting from domestic violence

Applicant has either a temporary or permanent mental or physical illness or incapacity that prevents the individual from working any type of job. The participant must provide the following application materials as proof of the illness or incapacity:

► HCS 175-*Extended Benefit Application*,

► HCS 176-*Illness/Incapacity Determination for Extended TANF Cash Assistance* (recommended but not required),

► HCS 209-*Request for Health/Employability Evaluation for Extended Cash Assistance* (recommended but not required), OR Statement or treatment plan from a medical or mental health professional addressing participant's illness or incapacity. (recommended but not required)

NOTE: The only difference between **PMI** and **PMD** is what caused the physical/mental incapacity. If it is a result of anything other than domestic violence the code is PMI.

NIH Needed in home – Physical/Mental Incapacity of household member.

The applicant is needed in the home **full-time** as the primary care taker for a filing unit member or a person who would be a member of the filing unit if the person was eligible. The person needing care must have a temporary or permanent mental or physical illness or incapacity and no other care is available. The applicant must provide the following application materials as proof of needed care:

► HCS 175-*Extended Benefit Application*,

► HCS 176-*Illness/Incapacity Determination for Extended TANF Cash Assistance* (recommended but not required),

► Doctor's statement stating:

- 1) The applicant is the only possible care taker,
- 2) That 24 hour care is needed, and
- 3) Anticipated length of incapacity.

DMV Domestic Violence

The applicant must be attempting to resolve a current domestic violence situation. The applicant must provide the following application materials as proof:

► HCS 175-*Extended Benefit Application*,

► HCS 176-*Illness/Incapacity Determination for Extended TANF Cash Assistance* (recommended but not required),

► HCS 326-*Domestic Violence Screening Questionnaire*,

► Proof of current domestic violence situation-this evidence can include copy of restraining order, written statements from other individuals, police reports, medical records, or statement from service provider,

► Proof that the participant has made contact with a domestic violence program, support group, advocate, women's shelter or the MT Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (1-888-404-7794).

OTHER IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- HCS 175-*Extended Benefit Application* is required for all individuals with an adult/child indicator of A or I and a participation code of IN or DQ.
- HCS 177-*TANF Cash Assistance Extended Benefits Referral* must be filled out, signed by OPA Case Manager and County Director and turned in with every Extended Benefit application packet. WoRC Case Managers must include a written recommendation for extension approval/denial that must be submitted with the HCS 177.
- HCS 250-*Application for Assistance* is required for new applicants or households that apply after the effective date of case closure.
- EBI code can only be used on extension cases and only with Central Office approval.
- If approved for extended benefits, participants must comply with required activities and fulfill 108/132 hours per month unless accommodations are approved. NOTE: If totally unable to work, they generally have to have accommodated activities.
- If a participant does not comply with required activities, and good cause is not granted, the case should be closed due to non-compliance. The closure notice must list the specific activities the client did not complete and what remains as a requirement for the rest of the month. (Reminder: Extension cases do not have sanctions/penalty periods. Therefore if the client completes all required activities prior to the end of the month, the case must be reverted to open without having to file a new application. This is why the closure notice must be very specific. If the notice states the client failed to complete a chemical dependency evaluation and the notice fails to list the requirement to continue their WEX, the only thing they have to do to be reverted to open is the chemical dependency evaluation. They would not have to verify they are in full compliance with the WEX.
- Fair hearings disputing denial of extension due to not meeting criterion are managed by Central Office.
- Fair hearings disputing compliance with activities are managed by OPA County Directors but Central Office and Regional Policy Specialists are always available for support/guidance.

UPDATED MANUAL MATERIAL WILL BE DISTRIBUTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. UNTIL THAT TIME, USE THIS REMINDER AS A GUIDE. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR WORC MONITOR OR REGIONAL POLICY SPECIALIST.

Thank you.